

# Injury sparks Facebook taunts

DHS boys junior varsity soccer  
players hurt against Panthers.

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Two players from the Duxbury High School boys' junior varsity team were injured during a game against Whitman-Hanson last Wednesday. The incident — and a series of Facebook postings after the fact — have led to a Whitman-

Hanson student being suspended from playing any sports for the rest of the year.

Whitman-Hanson Regional School District Superintendent Ruth Gilbert-Whitner said there had been a couple of plays where two Duxbury players were injured and sent

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to the hospital as a result of the injuries. One of the injured players suffered a concussion. DHS Athletic Director Thom Holdgate said as of Monday that student had not come back to school, however, Gilbert-Whitner said he had been released from the hospital. The names of the students were not released.

Whitman-Hanson officials said that no penalties or cards were issued during the game, and W-H Athletic Director Jim Daley said that the first incident was ruled a legal hit.

"The officials, saw the first contact and determined it was just a hard play," he said. However the other incident, which resulted in the DHS student's concussion, was away from the ball and no one had a clear view of what happened.

"I can't find anybody who really saw it," Daley said. "It was away from the play, I don't even know which way."

After the game, the Whitman-Hanson player who had been involved in the second injury made "unpleasant and unkind remarks" on the social networking site Facebook, according to Gilbert-Whitner.

She said the Whitman-Hanson player has been suspended from any sports for the remainder of the year. She added that Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association governs rules on athletic events, but there is a grey area for incidents that happen after the game.

"[The Whitman-Hanson Regional School District] does not condone poor sportsman-like behavior, aggressive playing or the misuse of social networks," Gilbert-Whitner said.

Holdgate said that his main concern was to make sure Whitman-Hanson officials knew of the postings.

"We found out about the online stuff and we simply made sure Whitman-Hanson was aware of it," he said. "It's basically a matter for Whitman-Hanson."

Holdgate said that similar incidents have come to his attention in the past, in terms of comments made away from the field, but only in the form of rumors. This time, because of the record on Facebook, there was something to bring to the attention of Whitman-Hanson officials.

Gilbert-Whitner added that school officials have told

the students over and over that "what they put on the Internet is there to stay and is there for anyone to see." She said the district will be using this as a "teachable moment."

"People were hurt physically, socially and emotionally," Gilbert-Whitner said. "One of the positive things that can come from this terrible incident is that it will help young people improve their decision making skills."

Daley said he is nervous about the impact sites like Facebook have off the field.

"I don't think good things come out of it," he said.

Gilbert-Whitner said WHRHS Principal Jeff Szymaniak and Duxbury High School Principal Andrew Stephens have been working together on preventing any similar incidents from occurring and to prevent this incident from escalating.

"I am very confident Jeff Szymaniak and the administrative team handled the incident professionally and in the best way possible," she said.

*Clipper Staff Writer Dave Palana contributed to this report.*